



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

For Immediate Release
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**Charles Darwin's Work with Plants
Will Be Brought to Life at The New York Botanical Garden**
Darwin's Garden: An Evolutionary Adventure

Opening April 25, 2008

Exhibition Highlights Darwin's Little-Known Fascination with Plants

The untold story of Charles Darwin's lifelong fascination and work with plants, including how flowers have evolved their extreme beauty and how plants are sensitive creatures responding to the least beam of sunlight and the pull of gravity, will be presented in an exhibition entitled *Darwin's Garden: An Evolutionary Adventure* at The New York Botanical Garden on April 25–June 15, 2008

Darwin's Garden will include exhibitions of living plants and historical documents in three Botanical Garden venues: the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, LuEsther T. Mertz Library gallery, and Everett Children's Adventure Garden, plus an "evolutionary tour" of living plants demonstrating key points on the evolutionary Tree of Life. It will paint a portrait of Darwin as a naturalist and plantsman and show how Darwin's botanical experiments and discoveries helped shape his contributions to the understanding of life in general.

Darwin historian David Kohn, Ph.D., comments, "Only in his work as a botanist can we truly see all the dimensions of Darwin as a scientist—that is as a successful collector, as a powerful theorist, as an insightful observer, and as a rigorous and almost prophetic experimenter." Professor Kohn is curating the exhibition in the Mertz Library and advising on the other components of *Darwin's Garden*.

There will be several events and programs associated with *Darwin's Garden*, most notably a symposium with leading Darwin scholars in early May.

Darwin's Own Garden Re-created

The exhibition in the Haupt Conservatory will focus on Darwin's work with living plants, evoking Darwin's own garden, greenhouse, and experimental beds where he conducted botanical research. It will tell the story of how careful observation of the plants in his garden and greenhouse inspired Darwin's groundbreaking thinking about natural selection and evolution. The exhibition will re-create Darwin's gardens at Down House, his home in England, and the surrounding orchards and meadows where the naturalist made many scientific observations. Primroses, insectivorous plants, orchids, and climbing plants, subjects of Darwin's research and writings, will be featured in the exhibition. Other plants will illustrate the role plants played in the evolution of Darwin's ideas and will bring to life the kitchen garden at Down House as well as the famous "sandwalk" where Darwin made careful observation of nature and plants, the basis for much of his break-through thinking.

Displays of plants will evoke Darwin's experimental studies and his investigations into pollination and the power of movement in plants.

Darwin's Garden in the Haupt Conservatory will run April 25–June 15, 2008.